

**Congresswoman Kay Granger
Wright Amendment Hearing Testimony
July 12, 2006
House Subcommittee on Aviation**

Thank you to Chairmen Mica/Young and Ranking Members Costello/Oberstar for agreeing to hold this important hearing about a local aviation issue that has developed into a national debate and affects consumers all across the United States.

I have been intimately involved with the Wright Amendment for more than fifteen years as Mayor of Fort Worth and now as Member of Congress.

I am proud that the community has come up with a local solution that will also better serve the national traveling public.

Over the past several months, North Texas has shown both discipline and cooperation in assembling a thoughtful, comprehensive solution that meets the aviation travel demands for today and for the future.

What has transpired since last fall has been arduous, intense and even painful negotiations between all the stakeholders involved.

No entity got everything in this solution. Some had to agree to provisions that may have caused some discomfort in the board rooms or at City Hall.

However, these negotiations have resulted in an unprecedented agreement.

From my longtime experience with the complex issues surrounding the Wright Amendment, I have witnessed the negotiations between

mayors, between airlines, between airports and between differing responsibilities in the federal government.

In all my years, I have never seen the consensus we now have in this room and before you in the Joint Statement of the stakeholders.

If you leave with one impression of this Joint Statement, may it be this - accepting the provisions in a “piecemeal” fashion is not a workable solution to achieving the needed critical balance for all the stakeholders. It must be adopted in its entirety.

To illustrate the critical nature of this balance, I will address one provision and how its inclusion directly affected the different stakeholders.

In this local agreement, the Wright Amendment will be repealed outright eight years after enactment of federal legislation. This time allowance is absolutely necessary to provide operational certainty for the cities, the airports and the airlines.

The cities of Dallas and Fort Worth must be able to provide stability for supporting short and long-term viability of their mutually shared airport - Dallas Fort Worth International. DFW Airport is directly or indirectly responsible for over 200,000 jobs and crucial to the North Texas economy. Immediate repeal of the Wright Amendment could cause detrimental effects for the cities as they work toward keeping DFW Airport strong and building its growth for the future.

The airports must have time to adjust their master plans in order to protect air safety and build long-term business development on their properties. This eight year time period will enable both Love Field and DFW to make the most of their assets with considerable improvements to market certainty.

The airlines must be afforded time to adapt service in existing and new markets from both airports. Immediate repeal of Wright could put the North Texas commercial air industry in an economically-harmful state, and it would also deny airports and airlines the opportunity to react to market changes and passenger preferences after first implementing through-ticketing. In the long run, a phase-out approach will allow increased choices and competitive pricing for consumers.

Another important provision in this agreement is to codify the number of gates out of which Love Field can operate.

Limiting the number of Love Field gates to twenty operating service gates is important for air safety, noise and air pollution, and to the business and residential community surrounding Love Field. It is absolutely necessary to keep commitments made by the two cities to each other when DFW was built.

Codifying the number of gates at Love Field was a key piece to the agreement among the entities, and I support its inclusion in any federal legislation.

The Wright Amendment and the situation with Love Field and DFW Airport are unique, and require a unique solution. I think we have that.

This clarification is important to note because the stakeholders were tasked with finding a local, homegrown solution to end the Wright Amendment debate once and for all.

They found a solution that works for North Texas and to the advantage of the American consumer.

As a former member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I understand how hard this committee works to not

only solve issues - but to thoughtfully establish long-term policy with the best interests of commerce and the traveling public at heart. I believe the Joint Statement agreed to by the stakeholders and before you today meets these goals as well.

This agreement was reached through a holistic approach to solve the Wright Amendment debate once and for all.

We at the federal level must support the agreement reached by local stakeholders if we want to best serve North Texas and to establish certainty for the aviation industry and the American consumer, and we should accept this agreement in its entirety to protect this agreement's understanding between the stakeholders.

I ask that you consider this decision as a consensus to plan for the future.

Thank you again for your time and attention.